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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

P 121220Z OCT 75

A-131 SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

NO.

FOREIGN DISSEM

TO : Department of State

TAGS: PINS, GT

EO 11652: XGDS 2

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA DATE: 10 JUL 75

SUBJECT: Internal Security: Monthly Report of Incidents of Political Violence, June 1975

REF :

SUMMARY: The number of press-reported incidents of possible political violence in June matched February's record low of 25. This in spite of the tension surrounding the race for president of Congress and the selection of congressional committee chairmen. Several incidents were attributed by the press to the far left, but we don't believe it. Violence in the South Coast region continued, particularly in San Marcos Department. End summary.

I. Statistics: The 25 incidents of possible political violence reported in the press during June matched the record low set in February, 1975. South Coast violence accounted for 12 of the 25 incidents. Only five incidents were reported in Guatemala City. Eighteen people were killed in June; four of them showed signs of torture.

II. Attributed Incidents.

To the Right. The Chimaltenango town of San Martin Jilotepeque has over the past year been the scene of a number of incidents. In June, a campesino was captured by Guardia de Hacienda police who told him that they were going to kill him "because he was a communist." Julup managed to escape by throwing himself down a steep hill. When Julup denounced his capture before members of the press, the police claimed he had been taken into custody for clandestine manufacture of liquor.

Comment: As long as San Martin Jilotepeque remains a town on the leading edge of the cooperative movement, friction

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

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Contents and Classification Approved by: DCM:GRAndrews

Clearances: POL:GFJones POL-I:WEThomas

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY ____ DATE 7 Oct 1981
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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between campesinos and landowners is likely to produce incidents such as the one involving Julup. End comment.

III. Unattributed Incidents.

Two of June's incidents were ostensibly committed by members of the far left, but in our view the far left was not responsible.

On June 7 retired MLN politician José Luis Arenas Barrientos was gunned down at his finca in Chajul, Quiche Department. His four assailants burst into the finca office where he was counting out the biweekly payroll, and shouted that they were members of the FAR. The men killed Arenas and wounded two of his assistants, and then escaped without taking any of the money.

Comment: Arenas' retirement from active politics made him an unlikely target for the FAR. The fact that no money was taken suggests that local enemies, of whom he had many, may have been responsible. End comment.

On June 9, Timoteo Ayfan Hernandez was found shot to death near Guatemala City. In his shirt pocket was a note allegedly signed by the FAR labelling Ayfan a traitor. Ayfan had been arrested in February 1974 in connection with the murder of finquero José Rolando Cofiño Samayoa, but charges against him were subsequently dropped. At the time of Cofiño's death a purported message from the FAR claimed credit for the killing, but several days after the first letter, a second FAR letter, this one believed to be genuine, was received by several newspapers. It charged that the first letter had been a government fabrication and that Cofiño's murder had been part of a government attempt to "create an atmosphere of violence in order to justify a coup or auto-coup d'etat." (See Guatemala A-44, 1974.)

Three other incidents deserve note. Five persons were killed near the town of Nuevo Progreso, San Marcos Department on the night of June 13. None of the press reports listed any of those killed as being actively involved in politics.

In Chiquimula, two more comisionados militares turned up dead June 24 near the town of Olopa. At best half a dozen other

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comisionados have been killed in the Zacapa/Chiquimula area since February. The Army finally responded to the killings in early July when it sent a large number of troops into Chiquimula to sweep the area in search of the band responsible for the killings.

On June 27, José Alfonso Ayala Jacomé, secretario de conflictos for the FASGUA-affiliated breadworkers' union, was kidnapped in Guatemala City. Nothing was heard from him until he was released unharmed July 5 in Zacapa.

Comment: FASGUA is a communist-dominated federation which last year joined the WFTU [redacted]

NOTE: This is the last airgram of this series. In the future, statistics and significant incidents of political violence will be reported in the biweekly political review.

MELOY

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EXEMPT FROM GDS OF EO 11652.
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2)